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Programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017

Oceans and the law of the sea

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Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/71/L.26

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

I. Introduction

1. The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects met at United Nations Headquarters from 3 to 9 August 2016. Its report was submitted by the Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole in a letter dated 25 August 2016 addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/71/362), pursuant to paragraph 283 of Assembly resolution 70/235. Section III of the report sets out the agreed recommendations and programme of work for the period 2017-2020, which were submitted to the Assembly before the end of its seventieth session, pursuant to the same paragraph of resolution 70/235.

II. Requests contained in the draft resolution

2. Under the terms of operative paragraphs 299, 305, 307, 311, 316, 317 and 349 of draft resolution A/71/L.26, the General Assembly would:

(a) Endorse the recommendations adopted by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole at its seventh meeting;

(b) Request the Bureau to continue to put into practice the decisions and guidance of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole during the intersessional

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period, including by providing oversight of the delivery of the programme of work for the period 2017-2020 for the second cycle of the Regular Process;

(c) Invite the Group of Experts and other relevant partners to begin working on the programme of work for the period 2017-2020 for the second cycle of the Regular Process as soon as possible;

(d) Request the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole to develop a mechanism to establish a Pool of Experts for the second cycle of the Regular Process, including by inviting individuals who served in the Pool of Experts during the first cycle of the Regular Process to indicate to the secretariat of the Regular Process whether they would be interested in serving in the Pool of Experts for the second cycle;

(e) Request the Secretary-General to secure the necessary resources, including the option of the regular budget of the Organization, for the programme of work for the period 2017-2020 for the second cycle of the Regular Process, as adopted by the seventh meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole, in accordance with established procedures and within the respective purview of relevant bodies;

(f) Request the Secretary-General to convene, in 2017, two meetings of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole of no more than five days' total duration, one from 17 to 18 April 2017 to consider the Technical Abstracts in accordance with the programme of work for the period 2017-2020 for the second cycle of the Regular Process, and another from 6 to 8 September 2017;

(g) Recall the responsibilities and functions entrusted to the Secretary-General in the Convention and in the related resolutions of the General Assembly, including resolutions 49/28 and 52/26, note the increased number of requests to the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea for additional outputs and servicing of meetings in resolution 69/292 and in relation to the support to be provided by the Division as secretariat of the Regular Process during the second cycle of the Regular Process, and to ensure the allocation of appropriate resources to the Division for the performance of its activities under the approved budget for the Organization.

III. Relationship of the proposed requests to the biennial programme plan and priorities for the period 2016-2017 and to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017

3. The requested activities referred to in the draft resolution relate to programme 1, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, programme 6, Legal affairs, and programme 25, Management and support services, of the biennial programme plan and priorities for the period 2016-2017 (see A/69/6/Rev.1), and section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, section 8, Legal affairs, and section 29D, Office of Central Support Services, of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (A/70/6 (Sect. 2), A/70/6 (Sect. 8) and A/70/6 (Sect. 29D), respectively).

IV. Activities by which the proposed requests would be implemented

4. In paragraph 210 of General Assembly resolution 65/37 A, the Secretary-General was requested to designate the Division to provide secretariat support to the Regular Process, including its established institutions.

5. At its seventh meeting, in August 2016, the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole of the Regular Process continued its consideration of lessons learned from the first cycle of the Regular Process, including consideration of a way forward towards implementation of the second cycle (see A/71/362). It also considered the preliminary indicative programme of work for the period 2017-2020 for the second cycle of the Regular Process, presented by the Co-Chairs in consultation with the Bureau, and the information provided by the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 285 of resolution 70/235 on preliminary resource requirements for the period 2017-2020 for the second cycle of the Regular Process.

6. As outlined in the programme of work for the period 2017-2020 for the second cycle of the Regular Process, the priority activities undertaken in 2017 are to be organized under two outputs, namely, (I) the second World Ocean Assessment(s) and (II) Regular Process support for other ocean-related intergovernmental processes, through the preparation of outputs tailored specifically to the requests and needs of the processes (technical abstracts). Outreach and awareness-raising and capacity-building are also to be pursued to support the outputs.

7. In relation to output I, preparations for the second World Ocean Assessment(s), it is necessary to establish working methods and the communications and collaborative document management systems; confirm the interest of individuals who served in the Pool of Experts of the first cycle (some 600 individuals) and identify and appoint additional experts to the Pool; establish national focal points; enhance the process to appoint and constitute the Pool of Experts; develop a database of members of the Pool of Experts; develop a database of recent and ongoing global and regional assessments; hold regional workshops to build capacity, support the development of assessment(s) and facilitate outreach and awareness-raising; constitute writing teams and develop guidelines; scope and prepare draft outline(s) of assessment(s); review and submit these outline(s) for approval by Member States; hold in-person and web-based meetings of writing teams and of the Group of Experts; subscribe to scientific publications and databases; create an electronic record of trends; prepare draft assessment(s); edit and review draft assessment(s), including peer review and review by States; and finalize assessment(s) for digital and print publication and translate and disseminate the assessment(s). In 2017, activities under output I would entail the organization of five regional workshops to support the scoping of the assessments, and would require the travel of participants, staff members and experts to those workshops. Subscriptions to scientific publications and databases would also need to be purchased. Resources for the continuation of some of those activities and additional activities for the preparation of output I would be required in the biennium 2018-2019 and in 2020.

8. In relation to output II, the production of technical abstracts, it is necessary to establish working methods and a collaborative document management system; prepare outlines of the technical abstracts; review and submit the outlines for

approval by States; prepare draft technical abstracts, including an editing and review process, among other things, to ensure the securing of copyright and conformity with United Nations standards, including to determine the need for and/or respond to requests for disclaimers; consider and finalize the technical abstracts; translate the technical abstracts for digital and print publication; and disseminate them, including at oceans-related meetings. The activities under output II would entail primarily the engagement of consultant services to format and edit the technical abstracts, contractual services for the translation and printing of the technical abstracts and travel expenses for experts from developing States to attend meetings of the Group of Experts.

9. In relation to outreach and awareness-raising, it is necessary to develop and maintain a Regular Process web portal and online databases; hold briefings and side events, including for the launching of the outputs; develop and distribute promotional print and audiovisual materials; and participate in intergovernmental meetings to promote the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment, provide updates on the second cycle of the Regular Process and its products and establish areas of cooperation in the development and implementation of the second cycle. In 2017, outreach and awareness-raising activities would require consultancy services for the development of a web portal, audiovisual services for briefings and side events and the travel of staff to participate in intergovernmental and inter-agency meetings. Resources for these activities would also be required in the biennium 2018-2019 and in 2020.

10. In relation to capacity-building, it is necessary to compile and maintain a capacity-building inventory; hold and follow up on regional workshops, which will play a central role in raising the awareness of stakeholders to the Regular Process, identify and collect data, identify and scope regional priorities to be considered during the second cycle, engage in the wider dissemination of the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment and foster wider geographical representation in the appointment of experts to the Pool of Experts; hold a multi-stakeholder dialogue (case studies of good practices) and a capacity-building partnership event; and fundraise for the Regular Process special scholarship trust fund and the implementation of the special scholarship. In 2017, this would entail the organization of a capacity-building partnership event in New York, which would require audiovisual services, the engagement of a consultant to build the online capacity-building inventory, and the travel of experts to the event. Resources for many of these activities would also be required in the biennium 2018-2019 and in 2020.

11. In order to successfully implement the mandates set out in draft resolution A/71/L.26 and achieve the outputs described above during the biennium 2016-2017, the secretariat would be required to perform, among other things, the following functions, as specified in the programme of work for the period 2017-2020 for the second cycle of the Regular Process, as well as conference services for the translation of the reports:

(a) Carry out secretariat functions for the Regular Process, including administrative services;

(b) Provide assistance to delegations and support to the Bureau, the Co-Chairs, the Group of Experts, including the Joint Coordinators, and the Pool of Experts;

(c) Service meetings of the relevant institutions that support the Regular Process:

(i) The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole, which, pursuant to paragraph 317 of draft resolution A/71/L.26, will hold two meetings in 2017, for a total of five days: one from 17 to 18 April 2017 and the other from 6 to 8 September 2017. The Joint Coordinators of the Group of Experts would attend the meetings of the Working Group;

(ii) The Bureau of the Working Group, which will meet throughout the second cycle and, on average, once a month;

(iii) The Group of Experts, which will hold periodic in-person meetings (tentatively, one in 2017, two each in 2018 and 2019 and one in 2020) and regular web-based meetings;

(d) Hold inter-agency cooperation and coordination meetings, both in person and web-based as practicable, to secure firm commitments and inputs, facilitate such cooperation and coordination, raise awareness of the Regular Process and its outputs and facilitate capacity-building, data collection and nominations for the Pool of Experts through the network of partner agencies;

(e) Prepare documents, including background materials, summaries of issues and views of delegations, meeting reports and notes;

(f) Conduct the substantive review of the technical abstracts, formatting, typesetting and copy-editing and the provision of other support to finalize these abstracts;

(g) Provide support to the Group of Experts for a scoping exercise for the Output I assessment(s);

(h) Provide support for the establishment of, and liaison with, national focal points;

(i) Provide support for the process of the appointment and constitution of the Pool of Experts, including a review of the process;

(j) Provide the organization and substantive servicing of and follow-up to regional workshops;

(k) Provide support for the drafting of the assessment(s) through:

(i) Compilation of recent and ongoing assessments;

(ii) Facilitation of communications, including through the establishment of communications and collaborative document management systems;

(iii) Provision of substantive guidance and review, as required;

(iv) Preparation of an index;

(l) Edit, format and publish the assessment(s);

(m) Develop a communications strategy;

(n) Establish partnerships with relevant stakeholders;

(o) Conduct awareness-raising campaigns and outreach activities, including within intergovernmental meetings;

(p) Compile and maintain a capacity-building inventory of needs and opportunities;

(q) Develop and maintain a Regular Process web portal and databases on available assessments and capacity-building inventory;

(r) Provide briefings, organize side events and develop promotional materials;

(s) Prepare summaries of views of meeting participants for the Working Group, its Bureau and Co-Chairs, the Group of Experts and the Pool of Experts;

(t) Raise awareness of and provide technical support to the Regular Process;

(u) Administer the Regular Process trust fund, including fundraising, donor engagement, the management of contributions, reporting, the disbursement of funds and travel management.

V. Financial implications of the proposals

12. The total estimated costs for the bienniums 2016-2017, 2018-2019 and 2020-2021 would amount to $4,392,200 under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, under section 8, Legal affairs, and under section 29D, Office of Central Support Services. As detailed in the table below, the adoption of draft resolution A/71/L.26 would give rise to additional requirements, including the following:

(a) Pursuant to the request contained in operative paragraph 317, the request for meetings services for the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole would be provided on an "if available" basis. With regard to the request for documentation services, this would constitute an addition to the documentation workload of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management of one post-session document (22,500 words) in 2017 and one post-session document (375,000 words) in 2020, to be issued in all six official languages;

(b) Two new temporary posts, one Programme Officer (P-3) and one Programme Assistant (General Service (Other Level)), would be required to strengthen the capacity of the Division, including the provision of assistance to support the efficient and effective secretariat services provided by the Division to the Regular Process, including its established institutions;

(c) To carry out the mandated activities, operational resources, such as consultants, travel of staff and meeting participants, contractual services and general operating costs, relating to the achievement of output I, output II, outreach and capacity-building would be required under the programme budgets for the bienniums 2016-2017, 2018-2019 and 2020-2021.

Additional resource requirements by section of the programme budget

(United States dollars)

	Total resource requirements	*Resource requirements for 2017*	*Resource requirements for 2018-2019*	*Resource requirements for 2020*
Section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management	1 717 600	97 900	–	1 619 700
Section 8, Legal affairs				
Temporary posts: one Programme Officer (P-3) and one Programme Assistant, General Service (Other Level)	812 500	124 600	458 600	229 300
Consultants	98 900	47 800	15 700	35 400
Travel of staff	161 700	54 300	83 600	23 800
Travel of meeting participants	1 276 000	280 000	841 000	155 000
Contractual services	104 700	31 300	23 600	49 800
General operating costs	15 700	5 500	7 700	2 500
Supplies and materials	6 900	3 900	2 000	1 000
Subtotal, section 8	**2 476 400**	**547 400**	**1 432 200**	**496 800**
Section 29D, Office of Central Support Services	198 200	102 800	63 600	31 800
Total	**4 392 200**	**748 100**	**1 495 800**	**2 148 300**

VI. Potential for absorption

13. No provision has been made under the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 to implement the requests of the General Assembly as referred to in operative paragraphs 305, 307, 311, 316, 317 and 349 of draft resolution A/71/L.26. It is estimated that these activities would result in a significant increase in the workload of the Division in carrying out the activities of the secretariat of the Regular Process during the second cycle.

14. The activities to be undertaken under each of the outputs during the biennium 2016-2017 form interlinked steps of the processes necessary to achieve the outputs. Accordingly, it is not possible to identify activities within the relevant sections of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 that could be terminated, deferred, curtailed or modified during the biennium.

15. It is therefore necessary that additional resource requirements in the amount of $748,100 for 2017 be provided through an additional appropriation for the biennium 2016-2017. The remaining resource requirements of $1,495,800 for 2018-2019 and $2,148,300 for 2020 would be included in the proposed programme budget for the bienniums 2018-2019 and 2020-2021, respectively.

VII. Contingency fund

16. Under the procedures established by the General Assembly in its resolutions 41/213 and 42/211, a contingency fund is established for each biennium to accommodate additional expenditures derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the programme budget.

VIII. Conclusion and action required of the General Assembly

17. **Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/71/L.26, additional resource requirements in the amount of $748,100 for 2017, comprising $97,900 under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, $547,400 under section 8, Legal affairs, and $102,800 under section 29D, Office of Central Support Services, would arise under the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017. The amount of $748,100 would require an additional appropriation for the biennium 2016-2017 to be approved by the Assembly and, accordingly, would represent a charge against the contingency fund.**

18. **The General Assembly is also requested to approve the establishment of two temporary posts (one P-3 and one General Service (Other Level)) under section 8, Legal affairs.**

19. **Furthermore, an amount of $18,500 would also be required under section 36, Staff assessment, of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017, to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment, of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017.**

20. **Additional resource requirements for the bienniums 2018-2019 and 2020-2021 would be included in the proposed programme budgets for the respective bienniums.**